entered into with that country when it was a composite State. After it split into different States, we had to enter into an agreement with each of them separately. And, during the visit of a Minister of that country last year, I did enter into an agreement with him. There have been some changes in the pattern and content of the trade also. Earlier, it was a controlled economy; the entire" international trade was controlled by the Government itself. Now there have been some changes in their system and there are changes in our system as well. Therefore, now, we are not identifying, as we used to do earlier with the socialist countries, in the protocol, in the agreement, the large number of items which will be exchanged between our countries. The third angle was, of course, that there was a non-convertible rupee agreement. Now this was also to be changed, namely, from rupee payment we had to go in for freely convertible exchange arrangement. So, these changes were introduced in the trade agreement. So far as our imports from that country are concerned, basically, we import machinery, steel products, chemicals, industrial parts. And we export traditional items like textiles, gems and jewelleries, certain types of chemicals and certain types of engineering goods. So, these are our exports to that country. But, as per this present arrangement, it will be between the traders of these two countries who will exchange goods freely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q.No. 66.

Plans of Privatisation of Collieries

*66. SHRI G.G. SWELL:
SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA:†

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of privatisation plans of Collieries including foreign capital participation;

'The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Chimanbhai Mehta.

(b) why privatisation is planned for;

(c) what are the results if acted upon;

(d) the details of new technologies being applied in mining in the country;

(e) whether out of date safety measure were responsible for the recent mining disaster in West Bengal;

(f) what is the production of coal of various grades and import during the last three years;

(g) what is the quantum of capital required for total modernisation plan of collieries and the amount provided for in the Eighth Five Year Plan and envisaged contribution from private sector including foreign investment; and

(h) what is the estimated •deposit of coal and the rate of its exploration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL*! SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA* (a) to (h) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) Considering the need to augment coal supplies for additional power generation and to create additional capacity during the Eighth Plan, Government have taken a decision to allow private sector participation in the coal mining for captive purposes.

Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 has accordingly been amended w.e.f. 9.6.1993 to allow private sector participation in coal mining for purposes of generation of power, and for other end uses to be notified in addition to existing provision for iron and steel. It includes foreign participation subject to fulfilment

of other requirements under the Mines and Minerals Regulation and Development Act.

Out of 25 proposals received from private (Indian and Foreign) companies for captive mining 15 proposals have so far been considered and coal blocks have been identified for 13 companies.

(d) New technologies are being applied both in Opencast and Underground mining in India.

In Opencast mining, heavy Earth Moving Machinery like Dragline, Shovels, Dumpers, Crushers, Conveyors etc. are being deployed. In Underground mining several new techniques e.g. powered support longwall systems, sub-level caving, Blasting gallery method, Shield mining etc. have been introduced.

(e) The Ministry of Labour has constituted a Court of Inquiry headed by Mr. Justice Shamsuddin Ahmed, formerly Judge of the Calcutta High Court, to hold an inquiry into the accident.

(f) The production of coal of various grades and import of coal by Steel Plants during last 3 years are as under:—

(in Million Tonnes)

Production	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Coking Coal:			
(a) Steel & Washery Grades	31.80	32.77	32.33
(b) Other Grades	13.76	12.95	13.07
Non-Coking Coal:			
(c) Grades A, B. C & Assam Coal	67.37	72.14	7S.37
(d) Other Grades	98.80	111.42	117.46
Imports by Steel Plants	5.72	6.08	6.71

(g) Modernisation in the Coal Sector is a continuous process undertaken by Coal Companies. Most of on-going projects, reorganisation projects and new projects have been formulated or are being formulated aimuig at improved ventilation, transportation-loading system, surface floor support, lighting, mechanisation of hazardous manual job and adoption of new mining methods. The funds diverted for most of on-going projects and new projects have the component for modernisation. The outlay for such projects during 8th Plan period is approximately Rs. 5600 crores for Coal India Limited and Rs. 1299 crores for Singareni Collieries Company Limited.

No contribution from private sector, including foreign, is envisaged in modernization of our collieries.

(h) As on 01.01.1994, the total coal reserves of India down to a depth of 1200 metres have been estimated by Geological Survey of India at 1,96,891.87 million tonnes, as against 1,93,777.13 million tonnes as on 01.01.1993.

12.00 NOON

SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: Sir, privatisation has been undertaken mainly for captive mines. Therefore, I want to know whether the Government is going to invite foreign capital in the modernisation programmes of captive mines.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, the Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Objectives of VABAL Scheme

*64.SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in various newspapers including Economic Times of 8th February, 1994 about the gross misuse of Value Based Advanced Licensing (VABAL) Scheme by fradulent exporters;

(b) what were the objectives of Government in formulating VABAL Scheme;

(c) whether these objectives have been achieved and to what extent have our export earnings improved in real terms;

(d) whether Government have been